



Records Storage Follow- Up Review

King County Auditor's Office

Wendy Soo Hoo, Senior Management Auditor

July 26, 2005



Presentation Outline

- General Conclusions
- Introduction and Background
- Audit Objective
- Findings and Recommendations
- Summary of Executive Response



General Conclusions

- Implementation of recommendations from our 2004 study led to efficiencies and reduced unit costs.
- However, the county records center inventory is near capacity and net inventory growth is expected to continue.
- We recommended improved planning to accommodate growth.



Introduction and Background

- In 2004, the city and county auditors' offices conducted a joint study to explore records storage partnering opportunities.
- The study identified recommendations for independent operational improvements and a potential partnering opportunity:
 - Implement incentives to encourage timely records disposal.
 - Consider expanding use of private records storage.
 - Consider a joint purchase of a new records center software system.



Follow-Up Review Objective

- The objective of the follow-up review was to evaluate the County Archives and Records Management Section's progress in implementing the recommendations from the 2004 study.



Conclusion 1: Incentives Implemented to Promote Timely Records Disposal

- 2004 Recommendation: The Department of Executive Services should consider incentives to encourage timely records disposal.
- Follow-Up Review Conclusion: Records center now informs agencies that records with expired retention schedules will be returned.
 - As a result, agencies improved timeliness in responding to disposition requests, increasing effective utilization of storage capacity.



Conclusion 1: Timely Disposal

Incentives (continued)

- Historically, inventory has increased by a net of about 2,000 boxes per year. Current inventory is about 104,000 boxes.
 - Total capacity is about 105,700 boxes—including budgetary capacity to store 10,000 boxes with the county's private vendor.
 - Inventory utilizes 99 percent of county's total in-house and private storage capacity.
- We could not evaluate whether improved disposition practices were effective in reducing net inventory growth.



Conclusion 2: County's Use of Private Records Storage Increased

- 2004 Recommendation: The county should consider options for storing records with cost-effective private vendors.
- Follow-Up Review Conclusion: Records center management increased the county's use of cost-effective private storage services and also improved space utilization at its main warehouse.
 - These improvements allowed the records center to increase capacity, expand service levels, and reduce per-box cost by 16 percent from 2003 to 2005.



Conclusion 3: Joint Software Purchase No Longer Relevant

- 2004 Recommendation: The city and county should consider negotiating a joint purchase of a new records center software system.
- Follow-Up Review Conclusion: City and county software requirements are no longer compatible, so this recommendation is no longer relevant.
 - However, the county shared its current, non-proprietary inventory database with the city at no cost. The city agreed to share any improvements it initiates with the county.



Issue for Further Consideration

- A records center management plan has not been developed.
 - Future capacity requirements or initiatives that could impact operations are not being assessed
- Three factors could impact records storage inventory and capacity requirements:
 - Improved disposition practices;
 - County agencies' electronic records management initiatives; and
 - New alternatives for storing paper records



Follow-Up Recommendation

- Records center management should develop a management plan that:
 - Addresses inventory and capacity issues;
 - Establishes targets for restricting inventory growth; and
 - Evaluates the cost-effectiveness of options.
- The plan should also consider any county initiatives that could impact records center operations, and assess the impacts of the initiatives on facility needs.



Summary of Responses

- *The Executive concurred with the recommendation and agreed to develop a records storage management plan.*
- *Implementation of the plan is scheduled for June 2006.*



Records Storage Follow-Up Review

The Auditor's Office sincerely appreciates the cooperation received from the Department of Executive Services Archives and Records Management Section management and staff.